



TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Office of The Town Clerk

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 29, 2007

1 I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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3 The Special Town Council Meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. in the Town
4 Council Chambers by President Pro Tem Coleman. On roll call the following elected
5 officials were found to be present:

6

7 Mayor Jack McDonald
8 President Pro Tem Denis P. Coleman
9 Council Member William J. Brooks
10 Council Member Gail Coniglio

11

12 Also present were:

13 Deputy Town Manager Thomas Bradford
14 Police Chief Michael Reiter
15 Fire-Rescue Chief William Amador
16 Town Attorney John Randolph
17 Town Clerk Susan Eichhorn

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20 II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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22 The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Pro Tem Coleman.

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26 III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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28 The Agenda was approved as printed.

STC 10-29-07

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1 IV. REPORT OF MICHAEL S. REITER, CHIEF OF POLICE, REGARDING
2 OCTOBER 28, 2007, INCIDENT INVOLVING A TEARGAS GRENADE FOUND
3 ON THE BEACH
4

5 Police Chief Michael Reiter reported that at about 9:15 a.m., on October 28, 2007,
6 a citizen reported a grenade on the beach at Sunset Avenue. The citizen had found it in the
7 weed line and had moved it himself to the seawall. Palm Beach Police and Palm Beach Fire-
8 Rescue units responded, including the Police Department Explosive and Hazardous Materials
9 Unit. They observed the canister type grenade. They x-rayed it and observed it; it was
10 corroded; the grenade had no markings on its exterior whatsoever. The bomb unit attempted
11 to render the cannister safe. There was one civilian within the area, however, that was
12 unconfirmed at this point, who later reported that he suffered from the effects, but did not
13 require or request any treatment.
14

15 Chief Reiter reported that the device was determined to be a tear gas cannister. When
16 the gas was released it was picked up by the wind, and some police officers were located
17 behind a wall and stairway around the corner from where the grenade was located, and were
18 momentarily exposed to tear gas. Members of the Fire-Rescue Department, located at the
19 east end of Sunset Avenue, were also exposed. Three members of the Fire-Rescue
20 Department and one member of the Police Department were immediately transported to
21 Good Samaritan Hospital, and treated and released. Other members of the Police and Fire-
22 Rescue Departments were either treated at the scene or were cleared at the hospital at the
23 conclusion of the incident. He stated that he believed that there were about nine firemen that
24 experienced some exposure, and four police officers.
25

26 Chief Reiter reported that the West Palm Beach Fire Department's HAZMET team
27 responded to the scene, and tested the remnants of the grenade. The PBSO Bomb Squad and
28 the Palm Beach County Division of Emergency Management also responded to the scene.
29 Field tests and observations indicated that the grenade was likely tear gas. He noted that he
30 had personally observed the remnant powder and it appeared to be yellow powder and CS
31 tear gas, a riot control agent used by law enforcement across the globe. No foul play was
32 suspected of any sort. He stated that he had spoken with all of the injured police officers and
33 firemen at the hospital; all had recovered and were doing well and were responding
34 consistent with minor exposure to tear gas.
35

36 In response to President Pro Tem Coleman, Chief Reiter stated that it was believed
37 that the cannister had drifted in from the sea. He explained that many years ago the accepted
38 way of disposing of outdated tear gas and other munitions was to go out to sea at some

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1 distance and drop them overboard. That was no longer acceptable. The cannister had
2 appeared to be a vintage munition, and in all likelihood fell off a ship, or was disposed of at
3 sea. He stated that he did not believe there was any foul play.

4
5 Mayor McDonald expressed concern regarding the variety of reports that he had
6 received as to what the status was and what the conditions were during the incident, and he
7 suggested that, in the future, there be a procedure to get the correct information to elected
8 officials quickly.

9
10 Chief Reiter responded that he had spoken with Deputy Town Manager Bradford,
11 who had then contacted elected officials. He noted that there would be rumors during an
12 incident like this, and that he was happy to have the opportunity to fully explain the incident
13 at this point.

14
15 Council Member Brooks thanked the Police and Fire Departments for their good
16 work, and asked if there was a sense of the age of the munition.

17
18 Chief Reiter responded that the grenade would be sent off for examination, and he
19 was confident that the FBI would identify the actual time period and confirm that there was
20 only CS gas in it, however, from seeing it himself, it was exactly the type of tear gas that
21 every law enforcement officer was familiar with. He estimated that it was at least twenty
22 years old.

23
24 Fire-Rescue Chief Amador reported that he had nothing to add, other than that the
25 exposure was to seven firemen. Three were direct exposures, the other four were indirect
26 exposures.

27
28 Council Member Coniglio remarked that as a result of this incident, there was a new
29 learning level for the future, and that she was glad that everyone was safe.

30
31 President Pro Tem Coleman echoed that, and recommended that Chief Reiter bring
32 forward a request if there was any further support or equipment needed, as he learned more
33 from the investigation of this incident.

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36 V. ANY OTHER MATTERS

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38 There were none.

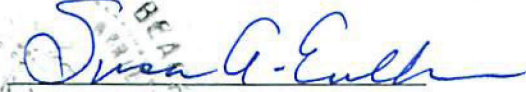
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VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 a.m.


Denis P. Coleman
President Pro Tem

ATTEST:


Susan A. Eichhorn, Town Clerk

